

Editorial

Unite the people,
oppose and defeat the
fascist campaign of the
Estrada regime!

For the Party, the termination of the peace negotiations between the NDFP and the Estrada government simply emphasizes the correctness of waging revolutionary struggle to defend and advance the interests of the oppressed Filipino masses.

The Estrada regime is not interested in a just and lasting peace. This is proven not only by its termination of the peace negotiations since October 1998, but most of all, by its continued treachery of the national and democratic interests of the Filipino masses—of its all-out puppetry to US imperialism and opposition to the welfare of the workers and peasants.

The Estrada regime can no longer utilize the peace talks as an adornment to conceal its fascist fangs. Because of its desperate attempt to override the worsening crisis of the ruling system and stymie the intensification of the armed and non-armed resistance of the people, the Estrada regime has unleashed a relentless fascist campaign. ▶

Decision to take formal cognizance of the de facto termination of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations by the Estrada government

Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines

National Council
National Democratic Front of the Philippines

We hereby take formal cognizance of the fact that the Estrada government has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations through the following deliberate acts:

1. In flagrant violation of The Hague Joint Declaration of September 1, 1992

1.1 the Estrada government has demanded as precondition for the resumption of the peace negotiations the capitulation of the NDFP to the GRP through the imposition of the GRP constitution upon the NDFP and the self-criminalization and submission of the NDFP to the legal and judicial system of the GRP and

1.2 the Estrada government has committed treason and betrayal of national sovereignty by ratifying the Visiting Forces Agreement.

2. In flagrant violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) of February 24, 1995

2.1 the Estrada government has indubitably shown propensity to ▶

84 firearms seized in NPA raid in Bohol

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◀ Decision...

commit treachery against the NDFP by previously “suspending” the safety and immunity guarantees of NDFP personnel involved in the peace negotiations, with only 24 hours notice in advance, and intentionally putting the lives and liberty of said NDFP personnel in serious jeopardy, under the false premise that JASIG is a one-sided document that confers favors from the GRP to the NDFP instead of a bilateral agreement of reciprocal rights and obligations that expressly respects the principles of parity, mutuality and reciprocity and the revolutionary integrity of the NDFP,

2.2 the Estrada government has imposed as a precondition for the resumption of the peace negotiations that formal meetings of the GRP and the NDFP negotiating panels be held in Manila under GRP surveillance and threat of punitive actions contrary to the express and binding agreement of the parties in Article III Section 6 of JASIG that formal talks be held in a foreign neutral venue, and

2.3 despite express guarantees under the JASIG, the GRP in general, and the Estrada government in particular, have subjected NDFP consultants and other NDFP personnel in the peace negotiations to surveillance, search and unlawful arrest, detention, interrogation and other punitive actions.

3. In violation of the 1998 GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), the GRP has perpetrated and continues to perpetrate with impunity serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law among which are the following:

3.1 Its military police and paramilitary forces have

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◀ Unite the people...

The resulting situation opens opportunities to further isolate and oppose the Estrada regime. This underscores the need for the people's army to launch ever-growing numbers of tactical offensives on the basis of an ever-widening and -deepening mass base to defeat the enemy step-by-step and accumulate strength. At the same time, a broad anti-fascist unity should be built among the oppressed classes and progressive sectors to fight and defeat fascist attacks in the cities, defend the people's legal arena of struggle and expose and oppose the anti-people and pro-imperialist Estrada government.

The Estrada government's fascist campaign seeks to suppress, terrorize the people and rain destruction on their lives. However, it is this all-out fascist campaign itself that will compel the Filipino people to courageously struggle against and defeat the Estrada regime. **AB**

tortured and massacred captives and civilians suspected of being personnel, constituents and supporters of the NDFP,

3.2 It has continued to detain, prosecute and deny bail and due process to more than 140 political prisoners on false charges of common crimes, in violation of its own Hernandez doctrine that revolutionaries should be prosecuted only for political offenses,

3.3 It has collaborated with the Marcos family and pseudo human rights advocates and lawyers in swindling the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos regime, by making a false promise of indemnification for the purpose of absolving the Marcoses of human rights violations and the plunder of the nation's wealth and patrimony, and fraudulently dividing the Marcos loot,

3.4 It has failed to take steps to repeal the repressive decrees and laws that curtail basic civil and political liberties and continues to invoke and implement them,

3.5 It has refused to end policies, campaigns, programs and projects that cause massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law involving as victims civilian populations and entire communities, especially in the countryside,

3.6 It has deliberately refused to appoint its representatives and nominate its observers to the Joint Monitoring Committee, and

3.7 It has refused to negotiate certain acts of war such as the release of prisoners captured or arrested by the NPA despite the offer of bilateral negotiations by the NDFP and precedents that negotiated releases are proven goodwill and confidence-building steps that enhance ▶

84 arms seized in NPA raid

Eighty-four firearms were seized by the New People's Army when it raided the headquarters of the 7th Regional Mobile Group-Combat Support Company in Barangay Rizal, Batuan, Bohol. This is the largest number of arms seized by the NPA in a tactical offensive since the Second Great Rectification Movement was launched in 1992.

The raid was successfully launched on the morning of June 11 without the NPA firing a single shot. It was conducted by Red fighters led by the NPA Regional Operational Command in Central Visayas.

The 7th Regional Mobile Police is the leading PNP unit waging suppression campaigns against the people and the revolutionary movement in Central Visayas and is responsible for numerous violations of human rights. In a statement, the NPA said it conducted the raid in response to requests from the people of Barangay Rizal that punishment be meted out to the abusive police unit.

The successful tactical offensive was the fruit of careful investigation and planning, both of which were made possible only through the deep and wide support enjoyed by the New People's Army from the people in the locality. In the process of investigating, the NPA learned that the enemy troopers were positioned atop and below a mountain. Firing and maneuvering would not have been an appropriate tactic. The NPA command decided to conduct a commando raid by stratagem and to use a superior force.

The tactical offensive was daringly executed.

More than a hundred Red fighters arrived at the detachment at exactly 6:56 a.m. aboard vans, posing as PNP troopers bringing in a captured guerrilla. This enabled the Red fighters to enter

the camp. It was too late when the policemen discovered the ruse. Taken by surprise, not one of the 36 PNP elements in the camp was able to fight back.

The tactical offensive lasted till 9:00 a.m. Before the Red fighters retreated, they were able to hold a mass meeting, conduct propaganda among the policemen in the detachment and distribute leaflets explaining the political basis for the raid. Two captured policemen were immediately released after an intensive discussion with them.

The successful tactical offensive is proof of the correctness of one of the basic principles advocated by the Second Great Rectification Movement—that armed struggle would advance in stages on the basis of painstakingly expanding and deepening the mass base.

Even shame-faced police officials could do nothing but admit that the raid could not have been conducted without the cooperation of the people of Batuan. Because of extreme embarrassment, the PNP command in Central Visayas relieved the following day the detachment chief, Insp. Richard Caballero, along with the entire Combat Support Company.

The successful raid in Batuan serves as a resounding slap on the face of the Estrada regime, which has gone all-out to terrorize the people and the revolutionary movement with counterrevolutionary violence. **AB**

Seized from the raid

Quantity	Item	Quantity	Item
55	M16 and M14 rifles	52	mortar ammunition
3	M203 grenade launchers	50+	M203 ammunition
1	light machine gun	20+	hand grenades
1	60 mm mortar	20+	rifle grenades
1	shotgun	50+	military packs
18	auto pistols	50+	vests
5	revolvers	100+	uniforms
12,000+	M16 and M14 ammunition	and many more	

◀ the process of peace negotiations.

4. In violation of the Joint Agreement on the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees of June 26, 1995 and the Supplemental Agreement thereto dated March 18, 1997

4.1 the Estrada government has adamantly taken the position that the CARHRIHL is neither effective nor binding upon the GRP unless the NDFP capitulate to the GRP; and despite unconditional approval of said Agreement for immediate implementation separately by both GRP and NDFP pursuant to Article 5 Part VI

thereof, and

4.2 with characteristic display of arrogance and undisguised threat, the Estrada government has served notice of an ultimatum to the NDFP that the entire peace negotiations be finished before the end of 1999.

By formally taking cognizance of the fact that the Estrada government has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, we hereby decide to inform the Estrada government to either make a formal notice of such termination or to declare formally that the Government of the Republic of the Philippines continues to be bound by all existing ▶

Two Statements

by Comrade Luis Jalandoni
Member, NDFP National Executive Committee
Chairperson, NDFP Negotiating Panel

OPENING STATEMENT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE NDFP NEGOTIATING PANEL

May 30, 1999

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Council of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, have issued the decision to take formal cognizance of the fact that the Estrada government has terminated the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

The Estrada government has flagrantly violated The Hague Joint Declaration of September 1, 1992, and has committed treason and betrayal of national sovereignty by ratifying the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

It is ironic that while we are celebrating the centennial of the Filipino people's revolutionary resistance against the US war of aggression starting in 1899, the Estrada government has undertaken a major act of puppetry to tighten the military and political stranglehold of the United States over the Philippines.

The VFA grants the US military forces the license to occupy all or any part of the country for any length of time, to commit crimes with impunity against the people and freely bring in nuclear and other genocidal weapons. The VFA grants extraterritorial privileges to US military forces, allowing them free rein to intervene in the internal affairs of the country and to wage aggression against the Filipino people and other peoples.

The ratification of the VFA is an exceedingly intolerable aggravation of all previous violations of the GRP-NDFP bilateral agreements by the ►

◄ bilateral agreements between the GRP and the NDFP and to undertake all actions necessary to correct the continuing GRP violations of said Agreements.

We shall deem as the Estrada government's final confirmation of termination of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations the continuance of the aforementioned violations or the failure of the GRP to rectify such violations of bilateral agreements or the failure of the GRP even in the absence of any formal notice of termination.

The NDFP will not engage in peace negotiations with the Estrada government until this government respects and complies with the existing binding bilateral agreements and rectifies its continuing violations thereof.

Our current decision must guide all revolutionary forces and the people. They must be vigilant and militant against the brutal attacks and psy-war tactics of the enemy and must intensify the people's war for national liberation and democracy.

Done in the territory of the people's democratic government, Philippines, on May 29, 1999. AB

NDFP RECEIVES GRP NOTICE OF TERMINATION

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), through its negotiating panel, received by fax transmission yesterday, June 1, 1999 from the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) through Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, the formal notice of termination, as provided for under Paragraph 5, Part III of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

After 30 days from yesterday, this notice of termination has the effect of ending the entire GRP-NDFP peace negotiations together with the safety guarantees for negotiating personnel of both the GRP and the NDFP. It is appropriate that there is this notice of termination because the GRP has in fact terminated the peace negotiations since October 1998.

It would have been more honest of the GRP if it had sent to us this notice of termination in October 1998 when the team of Sen. Franklin Drilon came to The Netherlands to demand the capitulation of the NDFP as precondition for continuing the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations in flagrant violation of The Hague Joint Declaration.

We wish to point out that Paragraph 1, Part II of the JASIG states: "All immunities acquired by virtue of this Joint Agreement [JASIG] shall remain in full force and effect even after the termination of this Joint Agreement."

We are giving fair warning to the GRP negotiating personnel that they lose safety guarantees as much as the NDFP negotiating personnel and should avoid committing any crime for which they can be hailed to the people's court. We decry the GRP scheme to retain the GRP ►

Estrada government. It is a gross violation of the principle of national sovereignty, which is the foremost guiding principle of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations as solemnly stipulated in The Hague Joint Declaration.

The Estrada government has likewise flagrantly violated the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees of 1995, the Joint Agreement on the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the Reciprocal Working Committees of 1995 and the Supplemental Agreement thereto of 1997.

The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NDFP National Council specifies the serious violations of the bilateral agreements perpetrated by the Estrada government.

The NDFP will not engage in peace negotiations with the Estrada government unless this government respects and complies with the existing bilateral agreements and rectifies its continuing violations thereof. **AB**

negotiating panel as a tool of psychological warfare for staging fake negotiations with renegades already in the service of the GRP and making futile approaches to the regional and local leaders of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary movement anticipates that the GRP will intensify the military and police campaigns of suppression against the people and the revolutionary forces at a rate faster than ever before. It is therefore just and necessary for the New People's Army to seize the initiative in defending the people and in launching tactical offensives.

In accordance with the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the people's army can intensify the people's war by launching tactical offensives from 81 guerrilla fronts in order to defend the people, to capture weapons and to deal blows against the enemy.

The conditions are excellent for waging people's war because of the worsening economic and political crisis of the domestic ruling system and the crisis of the world capitalist system, now plunging the world into widespread social turmoil and war.

Since a long time ago, the revolutionary forces have acquired their status of belligerency by waging people's war and not through peace negotiations. The NDFP will continue to carry out diplomatic work in order to gain further international recognition of that status of belligerency, without the need for peace negotiations with the GRP. **AB**

CPP condemns treacherous arrest of Vicente Ladlad

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) condemns the treacherous arrest by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) of Vicente Ladlad, one of the leaders of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), Karapatan and Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainee Laban sa Detensyon at para sa Amnestiya (Selda) and a consultant of the NDFP in the peace negotiations.

Ladlad's arrest by the military is proof that the Estrada regime brazenly violates signed agreements and is waging a war without rules. Ladlad's capture violates the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees signed by both the NDF and GRP. The Estrada regime is enraged with the series of successful tactical offensives of the New People's Army but has targeted a leader of the legal democratic movement.

Ladlad was violently abducted by ISAFP elements in Quezon City on June 21. He was captured after attending a Bayan meeting by ISAFP personnel who did not even have a warrant for his arrest. He was kept in solitary confinement for four days, tortured and deprived of the right to see anyone. As it does with other captured leaders and members of the progressive movement, the military slapped Ladlad with trumped-up criminal charges on the basis of planted evidence. The military planted a firearm and documents on Ladlad and suddenly revived an old criminal case against him that had already been dismissed by the court in 1991.

Despite Ladlad's having posted bail for illegal possession of firearms on June 25, the ISAFP refused to abide by a court order to free him, arguing that Ladlad had other pending cases against him. The military was compelled to free him on June 30 because of the people's widespread condemnation of his arrest and after Ladlad's lawyers were able to prove in court that the military was holding him illegally.

Estrada, Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado and military officials have threatened to arrest NDF consultants one by one now that the peace negotiations have been terminated. The reactionary regime is using the talks' termination not only to wage an all-out military offensive in the countryside but also to violently suppress the legal democratic forces in the cities.

All of this proves that fascism is the twin of the Estrada regime's rabidly reactionary, puppet, anti-masses and utterly corrupt policies. Thus, the people have no other recourse but to forge ranks against the exploitation, oppression, brutality, suppression and treachery inflicted by the US-Estrada regime. The people and the revolutionary movement shall intensify their resistance until total victory is attained. **AB**

Another year of crisis and hardship...

Within a year, the vacuousness of the slogan “Erap para sa Mahirap” had been rapidly exposed. Far from uplifting them from poverty, the Estrada government has wrought greater hardship on the people. Estrada is proving that he is a faithful servant of imperialism and of the local exploiting classes. Poverty far more debilitating and oppression far more intense for workers and peasants paint the starkest picture of the real national situation. This cannot be belied by manipulated statistics and pompous pronouncements promising a bright future for the Philippines.

Unmasking government “growth” statistics

The Gross National Product (GNP) and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) supposedly grew by 2% and 1.2%, respectively, in the first quarter of 1999. In a report released by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NCSB) this May, the Estrada government attempted to paint a pretty picture of the economy. It claimed that this “growth” was a portent of a “bright” future for the Philippine economy and indicated the end of the crisis that began in mid-1997.

But closer scrutiny of the NCSB data reveals the government’s outright lies concerning the real state of the economy. Hidden from view was the continuing crisis marked by the all-sided decline in production and in the people’s living conditions.

The most important factor purportedly behind this “growth” is the “recovery” of the agricultural sector which is said to have grown by 2.5%. What it fails to mention, however, is that the baseline data used for calculating this “growth” was the more than 6.5% decline in the agricultural sector from 1997 to 1998. In fact, if actual production is considered, output during the first quarter of 1999 was still 1.5% lower compared to that of the first quarter of 1997.

The increase in the value of dollar remittances from migrant Filipino workers was also cited as a factor behind this “growth”. In the first quarter of 1999, remittances totalled P48.4 billion, reflecting an increase of 11.5% compared to the first quarter of 1998. It is absurd to use this as an indication of “growth”. While it is true that remittances of migrant workers help prettify government statistics, these do not add up to increased local production. In fact, increased remittances indicate that the Philippine local economy has slid deeper into crisis. It proves a decline in production and the lack of job opportunities.

The truth, according to the Board of Investments, is that there was a

17% decline in new investments registered in the first three months of 1999 compared to the same period last year. It is also in this period that local industrial production shrunk by 1.9%, according to the NCSB, which was in turn reflected in the 14.4% decline in investments in heavy equipment or machines.

The decline in local industrial production also reflects a slump in Philippine foreign trade. The National Statistics Office reported that from July 1998 to March 1999, the Philippines posted a positive trade balance and is expected to register a \$733-million trade surplus this year. In any case, this is not an indication of a revival in local production and in the export of local finished products.

In truth, this is merely a result of the 21% decline in imports, including a 26.7% decline in the importation of telecommunications equipment and another 13.1% decline in the importation of industrial equipment. This indicates nothing but a slump in production that is dependent on imported equipment and materials. Semiconductors, the top Philippine export, fell by 4.5% during the first quarter of 1999.

The NEDA has likewise admitted in its report that the Philippine economy stays afloat only because of the government’s massive pump-priming designed to stimulate economic activity and create employment. But this results in an increasingly bloated government budgetary deficit, which, in the first three months of 1999 alone, reached P33.4 billion. The deficit is estimated to swell to P80-90 billion by the end of 1999, a level 33% higher than the original target of P68.4 billion.

In order to finance such an expectedly large government deficit, the government desperately seeks new foreign loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Japan. In this regard, Estrada faithfully implements the IMF and World Trade

Organization's impositions and has carried out relentless liberalization, including the removal of tariffs on the importation of rice, other agricultural products as well as assembled cars. This is aside from giving foreign banks the right to acquire 100% ownership of local commercial banks. The plan to amend the Constitution is primarily aimed at eliminating what little protection there is left for our national sovereignty and patrimony.

The regime likewise plans to impose additional tax burdens on the people, such as the road users' tax (additional taxes for registered vehicles). It is also in a hurry to sell the few remaining government assets, such as the Philippine Associated Smelting and Refinery Corporation (PASAR).

Therefore, the "growth" indicators that the Estrada government has been harping about are nothing but the last dying gasps of a moribund economy. The supposed factors behind this "growth" do not indicate the strengthening of the Philippine economy. Instead, they highlight the perpetuation of the economy's fundamental defects that generate crisis and suck the nation into the vortex of deeper crisis.

The Estrada government has targeted an economic growth rate of 2.6% for 1999. Even if this materializes, the Filipino people have no reason to celebrate, for as long as the economic program focuses on attracting foreign investors and loans and is based on the exploitation of workers and peasants.

Economic analysis: beyond the question of statistics

The government utilizes statistics or data to paint a distorted picture of the economy or lie outright about its real state. It is thus important for revolutionaries to properly study government data in order to belie its claims, expose the real social situation and educate and mobilize the people along the correct path of revolutionary struggle.

In analyzing official Philippine government statistics, one should, first of all, take the scientific, class-based and historical point of view. This means grasping the fundamental characteristics of the prevailing semicolonial and semifeudal social system in order to correctly contextualize, understand and expose government data and analyses; and avoid the reformist trap of erroneously formulating economic development programs and policies that fail to give foremost attention to or totally negate the need for social revolution as the fundamental condition for attaining economic development.

Through the power of the US colonial government and the successive puppet governments, imperialism prevented the industrialization of the Philippine economy and perpetuated its overall agrarian character. It allowed a certain degree of manufacturing

that relied on imported materials and was geared toward exports. This ensured that the Philippines would serve as a supplier of cheap raw materials and cheap labor for foreign big capitalists.

The Philippine economy is in a state of permanent crisis. Some of its distinct characteristics are the following: (a) an insufficiency in agricultural production due to the monopoly ownership of land and the backward system of production; (b) the permanent existence of a continually growing army of reserve labor; (c) an inability to produce or manufacture on its own even the most basic requirements, whether for productive use or individual consumption; (d) low value-added manufacturing that is dependent on imports and geared toward exports; (e) a continual drying-up of capital due to unequal trade and capital repatriation and profit remittances by foreign big capitalists; (f) a heavy debt burden and dependence on foreign loans and the continued devaluation of the peso against the dollar.

These are permanent features of the Philippine economy.

Occasionally, these are concealed by the influx of foreign capital that spur artificial economic activity. Among these are investments in the stock market, real estate, public construction and, to a certain extent, in export processing zones. These simply embellish the rotten system. These do not provide solid and lasting benefits for the economy in terms of employment and enhanced productive capacity. Such was the case from 1993 to 1996, and especially in 1996, when foreign speculative capital poured in after the reactionary government went all-out with the liberalization of the economy in line with the impositions of its imperialist master.

After raking in their profits, the foreign big capitalists began repatriating their invested capital in 1997, triggering a worse financial and economic crisis. This stripped the economy of its embellishments and exposed its rotten semifeudal core—that its non-industrial state and dependence on the export of cheap raw materials and cheap labor comprise the floundering engine that runs the Philippine economy.

Estrada's plan is to further liberalize the economy in order to attract more foreign capital. One of the objectives behind his moves to amend the constitution is to provide foreign capitalists with rights and freedom previously reserved for Filipinos, including ownership of land and 100% ownership of businesses among others. These desperate measures are the result the intense competition from other semicolonial and semifeudal countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa to attract foreign capital.

But even if foreign capital should flow into the Philippines, this will only bring about a worse crisis. The economy will continue to downslide in the absence of genuine agrarian reform which shall liberate the majority of the people from feudal exploitation and abject poverty, and an industrial base that will serve as the leading factor in advancing production and raising the level of the people's living conditions.

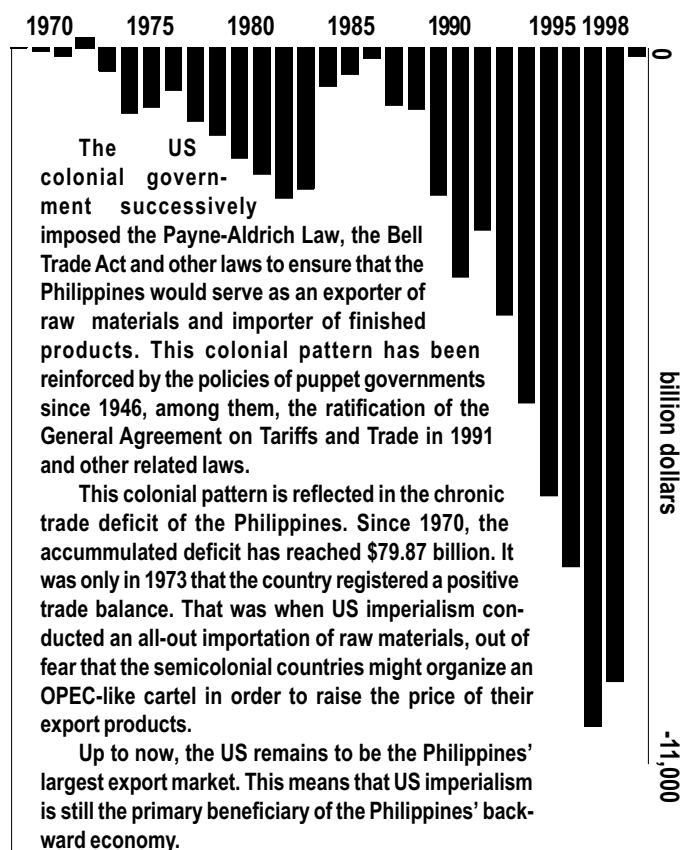
Thus, the question of economic development is a question of revolutionary change in the social system—in other words, this is a question of which class wields political power. It is to the interest and benefit of the ruling classes in the Philippines, of the comprador big bourgeoisie and big landlords, to continue collaborating with the imperialists in order to prevent and oppose industrialization and agrarian reform as basic steps in changing the economy.

It is only the Filipino workers and peasants who are interested, capable and determined to thoroughly change the semicolonial and semifeudal system and end the permanent economic crisis. ^{AB}

Fight for the people's economic good!

More than anything else, the poverty of the workers, peasants and other oppressed classes and sectors correctly portray the bleak picture of the country's real economic situation. For the past year under the Estrada government, the vacuousness of the slogan "Erap para sa Mahirap" has been clearly exposed as Estrada exhibited his faithfulness, not to the Filipino people but rather to the foreign big capitalists, comprador big bourgeoisie and big landlords.

The miserable living conditions of the people have deteriorated further due to the pro-foreign policies of the Estrada regime. Genuine land reform continues to be non-existent. Instead the Estrada government carries out schemes to further strengthen the monopoly control of land by landlords. On May 1, Estrada refused to heed a strong clamor for increases in minimum



Regarding Philippine foreign trade

wage levels, calling instead on the people to endure their suffering.

Prices of commodities continually shoot up, foremost of which are the interminable increases in gasoline prices resulting from the oil deregulation law. Because of the priority on servicing foreign debt, social services, including medical care and education, are deteriorating.

The decline in the people's livelihood has spurred them to carry out broad protest actions to defend their welfare. It is the responsibility of the Party to encourage the toiling masses to build the broadest unity and militant commitment to effectively struggle for their economic interests. The situation opens up for the Party the opportunity and responsibility to raise the people's anti-imperialist consciousness and link their economic struggles with the people's overall revolutionary struggles. ^{AB}

PNP criminal syndicates at war

Corruption in the civilian and military bureaucracy of the reactionary government is deepening and worsening. Irregularities and anomalies have become so conspicuous. Government coddling and protection of criminal syndicates and their operations have been exposed in the media—from major cases of plunder in the government, kidnapping, holdups, drug dealing and illegal gambling down to small-time extortion. In fact, it is government officials and bureaucrats who lead, give direction to and comprise the biggest criminal syndicates that operate nationwide. Their operations are coordinated by no other than the president of the Philippines.

That the civilian and military bureaucracies are rotten to the core has been further proven in the current feud between Gen. Roberto Lastimoso and Gen. Panfilo Lacson, two of the highest ranking police officers. In essence, it is a feud between two different criminal syndicates within the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Other major cases of bureaucratic irregularities and anomalies are being uncovered in rapid succession. The stench that such infighting has given off has led back to the highest officials of the reactionary government.

Consequently, there now are bigger cracks in Estrada's exposed and increasingly isolated government. It would not be far-off to say that this regime is going to collapse from the sheer weight of its own corruption and depravity.

Criminal syndicates in the PNP

Gen. Panfilo Lacson who heads the Presidential Task Force on Anti-Organized Crime (PTFAOC) is Estrada's favorite general and the actual superchief of the PNP. Meanwhile, PNP chief Director General Lastimoso is a Lacson man and was in charge of "protecting" Estrada's votes in Mindanao during the 1998 elections. Lacson, as Estrada's most trusted policeman, was slated for appointment as PNP chief. It was Lastimoso, however, who was temporarily given the post while Lacson waited for the scandal arising from his involvement in the Kuratong-Baleleng rubout case to blow over. This was also Lastimoso's reward for his loyal service to Estrada in the last elections.

Things started going bad for Lacson when Ronaldo Puno was appointed Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government. Puno made it possible for Lastimoso to be permanently assigned as PNP chief in April because he wanted to build his own bloc within the police organization to advance his political ambitions.

Suddenly, there were obstacles to Lacson's desire to be appointed to the highest PNP post and to have his drug syndicate lord it over the others. It was at this point that the Lacson and Lastimoso camps began exposing each others' skeletons.

In April, Lastimoso's coddling and protection of druglords such as Rafael Madraso, Dr. Avello 'Billy' Jaca and Vicente Sy, who all operate in the Visayas and Mindanao, was exposed. Making the disclosures were Region 4 Director

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Acop; Col. Francisco Villaroman, Southern Tagalog intelligence chief; and Senior Supt. Reynor Gonzales, PNP Anti-Narcotics Group chief. All of them are Lacson men.

These officials revealed their arrest in March of Rafael Madraso in a PNP buy-bust operation in Parañaque. Jaca, an ophthalmologist from Cebu, acted as a fixer to facilitate Madraso's release from the custody of Senior Superintendent Gonzales.

Madraso's arrest was spurred by an intent to stop his drug trafficking operations in Luzon in territories controlled by the Lacson camp and notorious druglord Alfredo Tiongco. Lacson and Tiongco wanted to recover territory from the Madraso and Lastimoso camp, now that Tiongco had been cleared of drug trafficking charges. Lacson and his cohorts publicized Lastimoso's anomalous maneuvering, including his bribery of co-officials to secure the release of imprisoned druglords he was in cahoots with.

The question of which syndicate controls which territory is of great significance to the feuding generals. At stake is the more than P50 billion they rake in annually from the drug "business".

"Confidential" government reports themselves provide proof not only of Lacson and Lastimoso's direct involvement in criminal syndicates but of the entire PNP bureaucracy. A report prepared by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency indicated that the two generals and their men were involved primarily in drug syndicates and illegal gambling.

It is not surprising that 12% of police personnel are drug dependents. This information, revealed in the first week of May by the government's Dangerous Drugs Board, proves the pervasiveness of the operations of ►

drug syndicates within the PNP. None of this is impossible because PNP generals themselves, namely Lacson and Lastimoso, control these syndicates.

Estrada's maneuvering

Joseph Estrada, coordinator of thieves and other criminals in government, acted quickly to quash the issue involving the two generals. With the help of his minions in the Senate and Congress, Estrada was at first able to have the two generals exonerated before the anomalies could be traced back to him. To appear neutral, Estrada ordered the suspension of Lacson and Lastimoso from their posts "pending investigation".

It was not long before Estrada manifested his partiality for his favorite supercop. Lastimoso has been charged with graft for bribery and accepting favors from Jaca while Lacson has been reinstated to his post at the PTFAOC.

Of late, Lastimoso's camp has tried to put pressure on Lacson by reviving the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case. But Lacson acted swiftly to destroy the credibility of the witness surfaced by the Lastimoso camp. It is now clear that the dominant camp within the PNP is that one headed by Lacson who is not only rotten to the core but is a bloodthirsty fascist.

This certainly does not signal an end to the disclosure of anomalies within the police organization.

But no matter what cover-ups or maneuvering Estrada and the feuding camps within the PNP have come up with, the masses of the people remain sick and tired of the corruption and iniquity of the police. In the countryside and cities, the police are notorious for violating human rights and now, their drug-related criminal activities have been thoroughly exposed.

Even the PNP's own survey in March has revealed that its highest performance rating for the first quarter of the year was a dismal 8%, with Manila policemen garnering the lowest score at negative 2%.

This image of the PNP is already well-entrenched in the people's consciousness. It is necessary to thoroughly expose the corruption of the civilian and military bureaucracy of the reactionary state. The correctness of revolutionary resistance has become ever clearer to the people. The Lacson-Lastimoso feud reveals the rottenness of the police and the extent of demoralization within the PNP. We should take advantage of the demoralization among their ranks through the intensification of guerrilla warfare. Mass perception must be transformed into concrete acts of resistance in the countryside and cities that are firmly linked to the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. **AB**

The urban poor:

Mired in poverty

Pinagsabungan, Malabon, November 1997. Living under the strain of a long-standing threat of demolition, Lorenda Mabini, 49 years old, died of a heart attack, while Rachel Aguillo, 12 years old, suffered a relapse and expired.

*More than 300 uniformed Malabon policemen led by Maj. Dante Buenaventura violated the homes and lives of the residents of Pinagsabungan to give way to a joint project of the reactionary government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. There were no jobs, no housing, no water, no health center—**there was nothing**—at the site where the evicted residents were to be exiled. Adding insult to injury, their supposed "permanent relocation site"—Towerville, San Jose, Del Monte, Bulacan—was already being bulldozed for yet another "development project."*

This experience of the Pinagsabungan residents illustrates just one instance of oppression against the urban poor. The following article depicts their plight, and how their travails are intimately tied up with the enslavement of the working class. The urban poor join the working class, and link arms with all oppressed people, in advancing the national-democratic revolution.

No matter how the reactionary state attempts to reduce their number through doctored statistics, it can no longer conceal the fact that there are tens of millions of urban poor who are mired in absolute poverty all over the country. And their numbers growing.

They are the proletariat, semi-proletariat, women and youth in the cities' poor communities. Many of them are former peasants and national minorities who were pushed into the cities because of economic difficulties, militarization and forced evacuation by the government or private corporations to give way to various "development projects."

Main problems

The urban poor do not have decent housing. They are found in urban pockets where they have little access to social services. For nearly a century, they have been subject to endless demolitions and fascist violence. Neither do they have regular means of livelihood; if they do, they receive slave wages. Skyrocketing prices of commodities,

the devaluation of the peso, even the government's imposition of new taxes pose a heavy burden on the bleeding shoulders of the poor. This is the picture of destitution that depicts reality in urban poor communities.

Lack of decent housing, violent demolitions and evictions. Along esteros, railways, under bridges, in dumpsites. The urban poor dwell in these places, if not in “danger zones”, the term the government uses for land destined as sites for future projects. However, despite the fact that they lack decent homes of their own, the poor are nonetheless deprived of the right to shelter.

To minister to the commercial needs of foreign investors, the anti-people government mercilessly demolishes the homes and destroys the lives and property of the urban poor. The state constantly harrasses and wreaks violence on the poor, making use of the reactionary military, police, and repressive laws.

Since 1986, 100,000 poor residents have been victimized by demolitions annually. In 1996, more than three million of the urban poor were evicted and their homes demolished in the mere span of six months in Damayang Lagi, the Pasay Reclamation Area and other places. Like garbage, they were swept away—to “clean” and “beautify” Manila, the site of the Asia Pacific Economic Conference Summit.

In 1997, a Manila court favored Landcom, a company with connections to the comprador Lucio Tan, against 500 poor families over ownership of a 1,500-square meter lot in Malate. The families had been residing on that piece of land for over two decades. Soon after, another demolition was conducted when the National Government Center Housing Project (NGCHP) claimed a 150-hectare lot on Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City. The city's SWAT and demolition teams who tore down the residents' houses had neither a notice of eviction nor a court order. The lot was to be used for a road widening project and the construction of a public market.

Under the US-Estrada regime, around 43,000 poor families are expected to be evicted from their homes in the cities of Mindanao due to rapid land conversion

and the influx of foreign investments. As of December 2, 1998, around 13,000 families had already lost their homes in a 426-hectare ranch in Baninsil, Siniwal, General Santos.

To date, there are numerous cases—some on record, others not—of urban poor communities being “erased from the map” to pave the way for “development projects”. (*see table*) In fact, approval of these projects are tantamount to having sold public lands to foreigners and the comprador bourgeoisie in accordance with the IMF's dictates on the bankrupt government.

These, and many other cases, prove that the reactionary state is servile to foreign and local big capitalists, landlords and bureaucrats. The solutions proffered for the problems of the poor such as the amendment of laws or the construction of new projects are deceptive and anti-poor,

“DEVELOPMENT” PROJECTS

PROJECT	LOCATION	AFFECTED FAMILIES
Marilaque, Laguna Lake 2000	River shores from Quezon, passing thru Muntinlupa, Taguig, Pasig, Marikina and Rizal	Over 150,000
Pasig River Rehabilitation	Napindan, Pasig River	90,000
NGCHP and Payatas 2000	Commonwealth, NGCHP and Payatas	Over 80,000
North Bay Boulevard Business Park	The stretch of R10 from Tondo up to Valenzuela	Over 70,000
Rapid Railways Project (PNR 2000)	The stretch of the railway from Bicol up to Central Luzon	Over 70,000
Privatization of the land of Tala Leprosarium	TALA Estate	Over 30,000, including leprosy-stricken residents
Privatization of Welfareville and NCMH	Mandaluyong City	Over 30,000 aside from patients in the hospital
“development” projects	Davao, Gen. Santos and other parts of Mindanao	24,000 families
Privatization	Diliman, Quezon City	20,000, including vendors and jeepney drivers
15 km. coastal road road	Tori-Agdao, Gen. Santos	6,000 families

short-term and palliative in nature. For instance, exorbitant amortization costs or leases for housing projects could never be afforded by the urban poor; such projects are nothing but business ventures for housing authorities. The government's National Housing Authority itself ranked 354th among the top 7,000 corporations in 1994 because its total assets reached P7.5 billion. Worse, capitalization for housing projects (such as PAG-IBIG Fund) are raised through deductions from the wages of workers

Lack of social services. Poor communities lack basic social services. Because the poor have no choice but to build their homes in any available urban pocket, potable water is seldom available in their communities. Neither are there well-equipped health centers. Because of this, the urban poor are highly vulnerable to illness and epidemics. Many children suffer from malnutrition.

Education is an impossible dream for urban poor youth. Instead of studying, there are some 200,000 street children who, at an early age, are forced to make a living to help their parents support their family.

In spite of this, only 2% of the P579-billion national budget for 1999 has been allotted for health care. Meanwhile, the government has set aside nearly 10% of its budget for the military, which reactionaries utilize to ruin the lives of poor folk. Education and other social services are not among the state's priorities.

Lack of jobs. While more than half of the country's labor force is unemployed, 65% of the urban poor who "have work" are only engaged in vending or take on a variety of odd jobs. In 1998, hundreds of thousands of the urban poor lost their jobs when more than 60% of the country's companies closed shop.

It is also from the ranks of the urban poor that contractual and casual workers are hired. They are forced to toil for slave wages under the most miserable working conditions. The increasing number of the urban poor serves capitalist interests well as the former comprise a giant reserve pool of labor. In factories, the urban poor are also victimized by attacks on workers' rights, as well as swindling by old and new yellow "unions".

More than ever, the reactionary state makes sacrificial lambs of the poor to gain the confidence of foreign investors. The state defines the term "world class labor" as the pegging of already measly wages, widespread

casualization and union busting.

Instead of eradicating poverty, the government's pro-imperialist and anti-people policies only further pauperize the poor. Thus, with its bogus pro-poor stance, the Estrada regime's boast that around 10 million of the poorest Filipinos would have been uplifted from poverty by the year 2004 has a very hollow ring indeed.

The struggle of the urban poor

For close to five years, poor residents of Calumpit, Malolos, Balagtas, Marilao, Bocaue, Meycauayan, and Guiguinto, all in Bulacan, have been resisting the Manila-Clark Rapid Northrail System project. Under this project, the homes of 10,500 families located alongside the PNR railways are due to be demolished. The poor families are all of peasant origin, pushed into urban areas by land conversions and intense militarization in the Visayas, Bicol, Ilocos and within Bulacan itself. These families have rejected the compensation and relocation package being offered by the government because no job opportunities exist in the proposed relocation site.

The revolutionary movement has intimate links with, organizes and leads urban poor struggles like this. It aims to build the broad unity of the urban poor to fight the worsening economic crisis which imposes ever-greater burdens on the poor. It is important to anchor these struggles on the poor's correct and profound grasp of their history and situation that are in turn rooted in the history and situation of semi-colonial and semi-feudal Philippine society.

It is with the militant unity of the communities of the poor, hand in hand with the organizations of women, youth, and the rest of the toiling masses, that their strength is forged, enabling them to assert their democratic rights and aspirations, including their economic welfare.

While their situation and demands have a particularity, these are all rooted in the urban poor's overall oppression as proletariat and semi-proletariat. Their suffering and destitution begin and end with the class exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the imperialists, the comprador big bourgeoisie and big landlords. Thus, there is urgent need for the poor to link the struggles of their communities with the struggle of the oppressed people, especially with the Filipino workers' movement. **AB**

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LANDLORDS**

The struggle of the urban poor is a struggle of the working class

Since the US imperialist occupation of the Philippines in the early 1900s, peasants have been streaming to the cities due to intense exploitation at the hands of foreign colonialists and their local puppets.

The US and their local henchmen brutally grabbed the lands of thousands of peasants and legalized old Spanish claims by creating titles for these lands. After their huts had been razed, the peasants were expelled and concentrated in “sanitary barrios” in the cities.

The colonialists continued to drive peasants into the cities where American businesses were being established. The foreigners used the growing number of the urban poor as a reservoir of cheap labor. Unemployment and the lack of decent housing began to fester in poor communities.

In 1930, workers began to demand for decent living conditions as part of good working conditions, and resisted their exploitation. As a consequence, the colonial government was compelled to begin “relocating” the poor into what were then called *barrios obreros* (workers’ villages) in Bago Bantay and Bagong Pag-asa. On the other hand, the building of roads, bridges, edifices and other infrastructure that served the commercial interests of the colonialists, continued.

In 1946, around 23,000 urban poor residents lived in communities surrounding the factories of Tondo and Intramuros. By 1963, the urban poor had grown to 10 times this number all over the country. Within two decades, they were subjected to repeated forced evictions, demolitions and relocation by the government. The state attempted to resettle the poor in the provinces, but most of them returned to the cities.

The urban poor have a history of militant organized struggle. In early 1960, they united (under the Tondo Foreshore Tenants Association or TFTA), fought for the right to have their own homes and land, and demanded legal recognition of these rights.

This pushed the reactionary Quirino regime to enact RA 1597 and RA 2438 that recognized these rights. After this, however, the reactionaries attempted to veer the urban poor away from the path of organized and militant struggle.

Community associations disengaged from this path in 1969 to build a group that continued to gain in numbers.

The group was later known as the Zoto One Tondo Organization (ZOTO). It linked arms with national democratic organizations in the ‘70s. ZOTO members were among the victims when the US-Marcos regime fired at a workers’ rally on May 1, 1971. ZOTO persevered and daringly joined many protest and mass actions against the reactionary state, the capitalists and foreign powers. Meanwhile, the reactionary Marcos regime continued to oppress, harass, destroy, burn the homes of, and forcibly evict, the urban poor, in the name of foreign and local businesses and agencies such as the World Bank.

To subdue ZOTO’s militant struggles, the reactionary state offered housing and urban development projects funded by the World Bank.

The reactionaries never succeeded in their attempt to subjugate the struggle of the urban poor. Since the beginning, the poor have militantly struggled for both their short-term and strategic demands, linking arms with the rest of the oppressed.

This, in spite of the setbacks and weakening of their movement in the ‘80s as a result of the general disorientation that afflicted the entire national democratic movement. Due to the perniciousness of opportunism and petty-bourgeois thinking, many urban poor leaders became hooked on corruption and economism. The reactionaries took advantage of this weakness, thus undermining the solidarity of the urban poor.

In the latter part of the ‘80s, insurrectionists hankered for “quick victory” against the reactionary Aquino regime. They transformed urban poor communities into “partisan fronts” from which military actions were launched. The reactionary government reacted by unleashing even more brutal assaults that harmed not only underground organizations in the communities but also legal associations of the urban poor.

When the Second Great Rectification Movement was launched in 1992, the urban poor were among the revolutionary forces that summed up decades of struggle, identified their own weaknesses and errors, and resolved to rectify and advance along the correct path of revolution – as forces integrated into the class of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

Up to now, the counterrevolutionary government has not ceased in its attempts to quell the struggles and

The fight in East Timor continues

The struggle of the people of East Timor against occupation by the Indonesian government and for their freedom and democratic aspirations, is now entering a critical stage.

This coming August, a plebiscite will be held to decide on the Indonesian government's offer of "special autonomy" for East Timor. Under this "special autonomy", the Indonesian government plans to legitimize its 23-year bloody occupation of the territory. Within this framework, the Timorese people will remain subject to Indonesian fascist rule. Moreover, international organizations shall take cognizance of Indonesia's authority over East Timor. In any case, there is no guarantee that Indonesia will step back and "grant" genuine freedom to East Timor should the Timorese people junk the "autonomy" offer.

In a related development, the Indonesian government has launched an intensified suppression campaign to ensure the vote for "autonomy". The reactionary government of Indonesia has organized local vigilante and militia groups to sow violence and to terrorize those who go against "autonomy".

Likewise, Indonesia has funded a handful of pro-autonomous groups to deceive and terrorize the people within and outside the territory into voting for autonomy. The Indonesian government and its co-conspirators are using the disorder and confusion that they have created as an excuse for the continued intervention of Indonesia and the return of its military forces to the territory.

In the face of such intense terror and violence, the Timorese are maintaining a firm conviction against "special autonomy" or "integration". This sham autonomy will only aggravate their suffering under Indonesian fascist rule, which they have long been fighting.

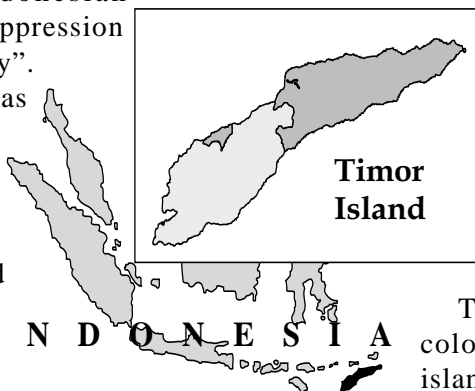
Beyond autonomy, the democratic Timorese groups within and outside the territory are unitedly determined to carry on the fight for their freedom and their democratic aspirations.

History of oppression...

East Timor is on the southeastern tip of the Indonesian archipelago. It lies at the east of the Island of Timor. It is located between Southeast Asia and Australia. To the north of the island are the seas of Savu, Flores and Banda. To

its south are the Timor and Arafuan Seas. East Timor is the territory of more than 850,000 Maubere people. The western part or West Timor is a province of Indonesia.

The Portuguese and Dutch colonialists arrived at the island of Timor in the 16th century. In 1856, the two colonialists formally divided the Island of Timor into east and west. The Dutch colonialists ceded the western part of the island to Indonesia in 1950. The people in the eastern part fought for their freedom from the Portuguese ▶



◄ destroy the unity of the poor. To reinforce its vile schemes, the reactionary government now utilizes the counterrevolutionary opportunist grouplets as its special agents. Through them, the reactionaries try to sow intrigue and lies among the ranks of the poor and divert them from the path of militant struggle.

The long history of the urban poor's struggle has proven that the problems of housing, jobs and rights, reflect the crisis spawned by the basic ills of society. Today, with their numbers reaching tens of millions, the urban poor are on the verge of

reinvigoration, thus posing a challenge to the US-Estrada regime that has been masquerading as pro-poor. In concert with the revolutionary movement, the urban poor demand solutions to their short-term problems, while accumulating strength to effect basic social change.

Treading the path of the rectification movement, each step made by the urban poor is made in the context of the overall struggle of the working class and the Filipino people for national and social liberation. **AB**

colonialists.

In April 1974, the Timorese people drove the Portuguese colonialists away and began the process of establishing their own government. This government was due to be supervised by the FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for East Timor Independence), a communist party-led front of the democratic and patriotic classes and sectors of East Timor.

But this process of establishing a free and democratic East Timor was nipped in the bud. On December 7, 1975 – due to the reactionary and anti-communist Indonesian government’s mortal fear of the FRETILIN – Indonesia invaded East Timor. Indonesia used the small pro-Indonesian groups’ “cry for help” and the turmoil that came with transition to justify its bloody attack of the territory. More than 40,000 Indonesian soldiers assaulted the island. More than 60,000 (or 10% of the population at that time) were immediately massacred within the first two months alone of the occupation. In July 1976, Indonesia violently annexed the territory.

The Indonesian government imposed martial law in East Timor for the next 23 years. During this entire period, the number of people killed in the attempt to wipe the Timorese race off the face of the territory reached 200,000 or a third of the population. Between 1977 and 1979, the Indonesian government launched widespread hamletting to cut support for FRETILIN which then led the armed struggle. Thousands of women, elderly and children were imprisoned, tortured and concentrated in “camps” where they were subjected to forced

labor and where many died from illness and intense hunger. Families were separated and many women were rendered sterile to prevent them from giving birth to the next generation of Timorese. Moreover, foreigners were banned from the territory for more than a decade.

Outside of Australia, to which Indonesia had promised the right to exploit the rich oil deposits of the Timor Sea, neither the United Nations (UN) nor any of its member countries recognized the authority of Indonesia over East Timor. But because the UN is controlled by imperialist countries whose “strategic” interests lead them to support the anti-communist Indonesian government, the international organization could only go as far as to issue strong words of condemnation.

The Indonesian invasion was and continues to be backed by US imperialism. The armed forces of Indonesia use war planes and toxic chemicals like napalm and Agent Orange from the US in their invasion of East Timor. Up to now, the

US is the primary trainer, supplier of arms and financier of the Indonesian reactionary army. And not once did the US nor the other powerful nations of the UN withdraw their support for the fascist Suharto government.

Because of its invasion of East Timor, not only was the puppet Indonesian regime able to get its hands on the natural resources of the territory, it also stood as the center of anti-communism in the whole of Southeast Asia.

**SINCE THE BEGINNING, THE
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... history of struggle

Since the beginning, the Timorese people have never fell silent. Throughout their history, their dream for a free and democratic East Timor never died.

Thousands of Timorese successfully drove away Japanese soldiers during World War II. After this, along with the rest of the people across the territory, the Timorese people united to overthrow the colonial Portuguese power on their island in the ‘50s.

After having driven the Portuguese colonialists away, the FRETILIN established the FALINTIL (National Army for the Liberation of East Timor) in 1975. Through guerrilla warfare, it gradually defeated the Indonesian army and established independent political power.

The broad unity of the Timorese people against the occupation of Indonesia was forged. In addition to the FRETILIN which represented the various oppressed sectors and classes in Timorese society, other parties such as the UDT (Union of Democratic Timorese) and organizations such as the RENETIL, the largest organization of students in East Timor, joined the fight. The struggle of the Timorese people garnered wide support and sympathy from different parts of the world.

In spite of the difficulties of advancing revolutionary struggle, including the capture and imprisonment of Xanana Gusmao, revolutionary leader of the FRETILIN and the FALANTIL, the struggle of the Timorese people is vigorously advancing. The Indonesian government’s deceptive offer of “special autonomy” is firmly being confronted by the struggling people of East Timor. This February,

Advances in the revolutionary mass movement

From Cagayan-Apayao

Mass work and the revolutionary mass movement continue to advance in the countryside and major towns of Cagayan-Apayao. Thus declared the regional Party Committee after its summing-up conference held in mid-1998.



The conference cited the significant assistance provided by a guide drafted by the Regional Committee's Executive Committee on how to conduct investigations in consolidated barrios, in barangays being recovered and in villages being targeted for expansion.

Results of social investigations served as effective tools in setting the line and calls in the conduct of mass campaigns and propaganda work.

Because of such efforts, anti-feudal struggles are advancing and reaping gains for the masses of peasants in the guerrilla zones. Reports indicate that land rent has been reduced by 25% and so have interest rates on loans (in varying percentages) in a number of villages. Wages of farm workers have been raised and land disputes among the people were attended to. Mass organizations that are being revived are forming mutual aid teams to ▶

Xanana Gusmao directed the FALINTIL to wage anew the armed resistance to defend the people against the intensified fascist attacks of the Indonesian government.

Support the Timorese struggle!

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) fully supports the struggle of the Timorese people against the occupation of the Indonesian government. The Party unites with them as they pursue their goal of freedom and democracy. The CPP also unites with the victims of human rights violations brought about by the genocide perpetrated by the Indonesian army backed by the local reactionary classes and US imperialism. In connection with this, the CPP demands the immediate release of Xanana Gusmao and other revolutionary fighters and leaders who have long been

In Eastern Visayas

The Regional Party Conference in Eastern Visayas was successfully held last March. According to *Larab*, the region's mass newspaper, the 14-day conference was attended by 45 delegates and 11 observers. The participants came from leading organs and included regional cadres representing 14 major lines of work.

The conference approved the regional document on social investigation and class analysis and the three-year Party program for Eastern Visayas. The new regional committee was also elected.

As a result of the conference, the regional Party organization has been able to reach a high level of ideological, political and organizational consolidation. Most important of these is the ideological consolidation of the entire Party organization in Eastern Visayas on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. Said *Larab*, the leaders and members of the Party in Eastern ▶



held captive by the reactionaries.

The Indonesian government and its US imperialist master must be held liable for the wanton killings, torture and imprisonment of the Timorese people. The CPP calls upon the people of East Timor to further intensify their struggle on all fronts, especially the armed struggle, against the Indonesian government and US imperialism.

The CPP believes that there is need to develop cooperation among the liberation movements of peoples and countries of the Third World against imperialist plunder. Imperialist aggression must be fought in all forms and ways. The CPP is confident that in the continued and united struggle of the oppressed people of the Asia-Pacific, US imperialist domination in the region will be defeated. AB

◀ *Cagayan-Apayao.....*

reduce the expenses incurred by peasants in hiring labor.

Mass struggles continue to be waged against militarization, illegal logging and corrupt bureaucrats in the region's consolidated barrios.

Legal organizations in the villages are formed or led and serve as channels for the masses' legal struggles.

Military atrocities and the forcible evacuation of barriofolk from Marag Valley have also been relentlessly exposed and opposed. The displaced villagers are among the thousands who were evacuated because of large-scale military operations in the early '80s. The campaign lasted until the masses were able to return to their areas and homes.

Propaganda work has been conducted in a sustained manner. Aside from revolutionary reading materials, the legal mass media were maximized as channels for airing the stand and calls of the revolutionary movement in the region regarding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), additional burdensome taxes such as EVAT, the Anti-terrorism Bill, oil price hikes, the rice crisis and other issues. Also condemned was the Cagayan provincial government's wholesale neglect of the welfare of small fisherfolk. Former Cagayan governor, Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo's collusion with big Taiwanese fishermen and the widespread smuggling of prohibited drugs and other contraband along the province's shores were likewise exposed.

In major towns, mass work and the democratic mass movement have achieved significant progress. Unlike in the past, the ideological consolidation of members of open and underground mass organizations is now being attended to.

Mass work in the region's white areas has reached a relatively wide area and relatively more sectors. Mass work is now being conducted among the youth and students, barrio youth, peasantry, women peasants, church people, professionals and government employees and national minorities. Since 1997, membership in the Kabataang Makabayan has increased, so with the number of schoolteachers in the revolutionary underground movement. Currently, the formation of open organizations and the conduct of mass work among traditional sectoral organizations are being developed.

Mass mobilizations such as rallies and forums have been sustained. A good experience involves the delivery of speeches and the holding of cultural presentations through mobile theaters by mobile prop teams in town centers and during market days.

The democratic movement in the city and major towns also advocated peasant struggles against landgrabbing and other issues.

Meanwhile, these past years, the orientation of supporting the armed struggle has been imbibed in white areas. A relatively big number of Party cadres and members from these areas have joined the New People's Army. A certain level of consciousness has also been achieved on providing support for the various requirements of the armed struggle in the countryside. AB

◀ *East Visayas...*

Visayas are ready to confront heavier tasks and bigger battles. They are infused with a high level of revolutionary optimism—a solemn determination to advance the revolution to a higher stage in order to achieve further victories.

Proof of the continued advance of the revolutionary movement in the region are the series of successful offensives in the armed struggle and mass movement:

March 22. Walls and buildings turned red in Tacloban City as members of the Kabataang Makabayan painted the slogans "Advance the Revolution" and "Youth, Join the People's War".

March 14. An element of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) surrendered to the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay Gihulgan, Pambujan, Northern Samar. Romeo Morado, a CAFGU under the 19th IB gave himself up after killing Edner Cabides, an abusive CAFGU who owed blood debts to the revolutionary movement. Morado also surrendered two M14s, five magazines and 62 bullets to the Red fighters.

March 9. Two soldiers of the 19th IB were punished in a sparrow operation conducted by two peasants who were members of the people's militia. Two M16s were confiscated ▶

21ST IB EXPELLED FROM ISABELA

As proof of the continuing development of close coordination between the revolutionary mass movement in the countryside and town centers, residents of Isabela successfully expelled the abusive 21st IB in the third week of February. The 21st IB, which is involved in numerous cases of killings, rape, theft, arson and other violations of human rights, was named "Best Battalion" by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in December 1998.

The successful expulsion of the notorious battalion was the culmination of a series of mass struggles that began in November. Thousands of people from the countryside and middle forces from town centers waged actions to expose militarization and human rights violations in the region. The campaign peaked in a march-rally attended by thousands in Santiago City, Isabela on December 5.

in the tactical offensive conducted in Barangay Cabatuan, Palapag, Northern Samar.

February. A .45 pistol was seized from an element of the Maritime Police by farmers who belonged to a revolutionary mass organization in Salvacion, San Isidro, Northern Samar. The farmers immediately gave the .45 to the NPA.

December 1998. The NPA disarmed bad elements in Barangay Happy Valley, San Isidro, Northern Samar. Seized from them were a .357 and two .38 caliber pistols.

In the latter part of 1998, the people's militia in Las Navas and Catubig, Northern Samar successfully launched "Operation Bawi" (Operation Recover) against carabao rustlers in the villages. Five stolen carabaos were recovered and returned to their owners.

A propaganda campaign was also successfully launched from December 26-31 in Can-Avid, Eastern Samar. In a series of mass meetings conducted with the assistance of the people's militia, more than 600 peasants from four barrios and sitios watched the film "Resurgence". The movie, produced by the National Democratic Front, depicts the revolutionary movement's renewed advance under the guidance of the Second Great Rectification Movement. This elated the masses in the villages being recovered by the Red fighters, because they realized that the revolutionary movement was still steadily advancing.

November-December 1998. More than 500 farm workers from 18 barrios in Northern Samar waged a successful anti-feudal mass action. Acting in concert, the peasants were able to obtain a P10-wage hike from the landlord (from P25-P30 to P35-P45 per day).

Meanwhile, Red fighters in Eastern Visayas further enhanced their ability to advance guerrilla warfare after taking a course on basic military training and political work. Before the year ended, 79 trainees from two guerrilla fronts in Samar attended two successive trainings. Among them was a squad of people's militia. In Southern Leyte, 39 Red fighters also trained in September.

All these are steps forward for the revolutionary movement not only in Eastern Visayas but in the entire archipelago. ■

Fight the VFA with all our might!

The Estrada regime has once more proven its utter puppetry to US imperialism and its brazen violation of national sovereignty and interest. On May 27, the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was ratified through the collusion of Malacañang and the Senate. Eighteen senators betrayed the national interest and voted for the VFA. Meanwhile, five legislators—Teofisto Guingona Jr., Loren Legarda, Sergio Osmeña III, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Raul Roco—rejected the agreement.

Subsequent to the ratification and the existing Military Defense Treaty, American military troops are once more free to wage large-scale military exercises within the country's territory. The country's seaports and airports will virtually be owned by US imperialism. Troops and war matériel, including nuclear weapons, can freely enter and leave without being inspected and without paying taxes or tariffs. In short, US imperialism may make use of any part of Philippine territory as a war base at any time. And as a flagrant surrender of the country's sovereignty, American soldiers who commit crimes during their stay here shall not be held liable under Philippine laws.

The puppet Estrada government's ratification of the VFA has long been expected. Conspiring with the US, a mass media campaign was launched to exaggerate issues related to the disputed Spratly group of islands. The objective was to create panic arising from alleged threats of a Chinese invasion of the Philippines and to justify the VFA's supposed role as a security umbrella should this occur. Even the leader of the religious group El Shaddai and a movie actor were used to deceive the people about the alleged benefits that would ensue from the agreement.

But the people would not be deceived.

Weeks before the Senate voted, militant and patriotic organizations further intensified mass actions against the VFA. A series of rallies, pickets and other protests were launched in front of and even within the Senate halls. On one occasion, pro-VFA senators tried to suppress a demonstration by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas by having its leaders jailed.

On May 5, militant women led by GABRIELA joined hands to form a human chain extending from the US embassy to the Senate.

On the eve of the voting, a protest caravan was held by militant organizations from Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog, Northern and Central Luzon to manifest the people's steadfast unity against the VFA.

On May 27, participants in the protest caravan from different regions converged in front of the Senate to stand up for national freedom. Simultaneous protest actions were launched by militant ▶

Statement on the Visiting Forces Agreement

by Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal
Spokesperson, Communist Party of the Philippines
25 May, 1999

There is only one correct response once the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) is ratified via a conspiracy between Malacañang and the Senate: the further intensification of the armed struggle, mass protests and struggles and other forms of struggle for genuine national freedom and democracy.

The VFA is a brazen violation of national sovereignty and interest. It is the duty of all revolutionary forces and all genuine Filipinos to exert all efforts to fight it.

It will also condemn the country to the shameful and accursed status of being an instrument of imperialist policy, aggression and colonization in Asia and the Pacific.

Thus, this ratification is a declaration by the GRP, and especially the Estrada regime, of its utter lack of interest to resolve the country's basic problems and the fundamental roots of the civil war in the country within a framework of the principles of national sovereignty, democracy and social justice.

Thus, this ratification presents another obstacle to the attainment of a genuine, lasting, just and liberating peace in the country.

Therefore, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and New People's Army (NPA) deem as correct, and firmly support, the NDF declaration of terminating the peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP once the Senate ratifies the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Accordingly, the Party and NPA solemnly pledge to muster all their strength to intensify the people's war and exact retribution from the reactionaries and puppets of imperialism for their treachery to the country. **AB**

◄ groups in major cities in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Even conservative leaders of the influential Catholic church joined the ranks of protesters. In a statement, Catholic archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin called on the senators to junk the VFA. The VFA, he said, is not an instrument of, but a threat to peace. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippine also made known its objections to the VFA. Thousands of people from parishes all over Manila were mobilized to join the rally in front of the Senate.

With the VFA's ratification, progressive and militant groups pledged that they would relentlessly expose and oppose military exercises by American troops and other acts of US aggression and intervention in the country. **AB**

DEFENSIVE TRANSFORMED INTO VICTORY

New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas overcame their defensive situation when their camp was encircled by enemy troops on the afternoon of June 16 in Barangay Dominga, Calinan, Davao City. Seven soldiers were killed when Red fighters fought against attacking elements of the "Alpha" Coy of the 73rd IB-Philippine Army. Six troopers were also wounded while another six sustained other injuries.

In a statement, the Merardo Arce Command, the regional NPA unit in Southern Mindanao said that two Red fighters died instantly when the military opened fire upon discovering the NPA camp. After the first volley of fire, the NPA quickly seized a more favorable position and were able to launch a counter-offensive. This shocked the attacking troops' commanding officer, 2Lt. Dominic Baluga, who ran and abandoned his men in the midst of the battle.

AMBUSCADES LAUNCHED IN COMPOSTELA VALLEY

Four elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and a soldier were killed in two separate ambushes by the New People's Army (NPA) in Compostela Valley this June.

Three CAFGU who were part of a team on patrol were killed when they were ambushed by Red fighters in Barangay Libulon, Mabini town on the morning of June 27.

Before this, a CAFGU member and a soldier were slain when Red fighters ambushed a composite unit of the Philippine Army and CAFGU conducting a patrol on June 1 in Laac town. An NPA blocking force also opened fired on the enemy's troop reinforcements.

NPA RAIDS PICOP, AFP DETACHMENT

The New People's Army (NPA) conducted three successive tactical offensives in Surigao del Sur this May. Red fighters attacked the 29th IB detachment in Doña Carmen town on May 23 and confiscated three M16s, three carbines and a handheld radio. Prior to this, the NPA raided the PICOP Resources Inc. factory in the nearby town of Bislig on May 19 and burned the company's machinery. Seven days before the raid on the factory, NPA guerrillas had also ambushed in Bislig a group of men belonging to PICOP's private army. A member of the PICOP security force died in the ambush.

PICOP, which owns a 195,000-hectare concession that straddles the borders of four provinces in Mindanao, is the biggest corporation in Asia that manufactures and exports plywood and paper products and engages in industrial tree farming. The three tactical offensives were launched by the NPA to punish the corporation and the 29th IB for its brutal suppression of the rights of PICOP workers. In 1998, PICOP colluded with the 28th and 29th IBs to break the workers' strike. PICOP also used the Special Civilian Auxiliary Army that serves as its security force and private army and brought in hired killers.

TACTICAL OFFENSIVES ADVANCE IN SOUTHERN TAGALOG

Five members of a private army and four soldiers were killed while three troopers were wounded in three separate tactical offensives by the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Tagalog this May and June.

Five security guards of Golden Country Farms Inc. (GCFI) were killed in an ambush by NPA guerrillas in Barangay Balansay, Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental on June 10. The security guards serve as a private army of Ricardo Quintos, the despotic landlord who owns the 7,000-hectare GCFI. Quintos and his guards are responsible for numerous killings, landgrabbing, intimidation and other abuses against the peasant masses of Mamburao.

Two troopers were also killed when Red fighters ambushed soldiers of the 76th IB along the highway in Barangay Walay, Padre Burgos, Quezon on May 25. The soldiers were aboard a Kennedy-type jeep when their vehicle hit a land mine planted by the guerrillas. Two other soldiers were wounded.

Earlier, another soldier was killed and another was wounded when the NPA ambushed a team from the 31st IB that was on combat patrol in Barangay Biga, Gumaca, Quezon.

Meanwhile, NPA guerrillas raided this May a Philippine Army detachment in Sitio Ilayang Crossing, Barangay Sayao, Mogpog, Marinduque. The raid was one of the first tactical offensives of the NPA in the province.

AMBUSH, PUNITIVE ACTION LAUNCHED IN SARANGGANI AND NORTH COTABATO

An abusive member of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) was killed while three soldiers were wounded in three separate tactical offensives launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in Sarangani and North Cotabato this June.

A corporal was wounded when Red fighters ambushed elements of the 25th IB on June 27 in Barangay Matbol, Maasin, Sarangani. The soldiers were on patrol when they were ambushed by the NPA. Red fighters had drawn blood from this same battalion a week before in another ambush, wounding two other soldiers.

Meanwhile, an NPA team punished CAFGU Rommelson Puig in Barangay Balite, Magpet, North Cotabato on June 20. Puig was aboard a motorcycle when ambushed by NPA guerrillas. He was part of the 206th Special Forces Team, a composite group of soldiers and CAFGU specially assigned to conduct "counter-insurgency" and responsible for numerous violations of human rights.

NPA PUNISHES POLICEMAN-SPY IN MISAMIS ORIENTAL

New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas punished an element of the Philippine National Police (PNP) who was an active intelligence operative in Salay, Misamis Oriental on May 30. SPO2 Antonio Terro Jr. was punished in a sparrow operation.

Killed with Terro was Loreto Tagarda, barangay captain of Looc, Salay. Tagarda was also involved in counterrevolutionary activities in Misamis Oriental.

NPA AMBUSHES CAFGU, DISARMS MAYOR, POLICEMEN IN AGUSAN DEL SUR

Five high-powered firearms and other military equipment were added to the arsenal of the New People's Army (NPA) in two separate tactical offensives in Agusan del Sur in May and June.

Two elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) were killed when Red fighters ambushed a composite force of the 36th IB and CAFGU in Barangay Oromica, Esperanza town in June. Two M14s were seized in the ambush.

Earlier, NPA guerrillas disarmed an abusive mayor and two elements of the Philippine National Police this May in La Paz town. Two M16s, Armalite bullets, a .38, a handheld radio and a radio base were confiscated from the house of Mayor Rufino Torralba of that municipality. Raids on the nearby houses of SPO4 Honorio Campus and SPO2 Jorge Plana also yielded another M16.

AMBUSH, RAID LAUNCHED IN NORTHERN LUZON

A soldier was killed while three other troopers were wounded in an ambush by the New People's Army on the 22nd Special Forces Coy of the 3rd Special Forces Battalion-Philippine Army. The ambush was conducted on June 21 in Barangay Mainit, Bontoc, Mountain Province.

Prior to this, the NPA raided on June 10 the "Pulisya ti Umili No. 5", a Philippine National Police sub-station in Barangay Pilitan, Tumauni, Isabela. Red fighters confiscated two bandoliers full of bullets for an Armalite rifle, fatigue uniforms and other military equipment.

TWO NOTORIOUS POLICEMEN PUNISHED IN NUEVA ECIJA

Revolutionary justice was meted successively to two elements of the Philippine National Police in Nueva Ecija who owed blood debts to the people and the revolutionary movement. According to *Lingkaw*, the revolutionary mass newspaper in the province, SPO1 Jose Ordinario was punished in Barangay Tayabo, San Jose City on March 15. Earlier, SPO4 Leodegario Maiquez was punished in Barangay San Pedro, Lupao on March 14. Ordinario was responsible for killing a peasant leader in 1990. Maiquez, meanwhile, murdered two Lupao residents and was involved in the murder of a resident of Cuyapo. He was also the leader of the "akyat-bahay gang" that victimized the people of northern Nueva Ecija and was a notorious extortionist who preyed on vendors and tricycle drivers.